



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

2010 FIA WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP RALLY NEW ZEALAND

End of day 'meet the crews' conference

8 May 2010

Present:

Petter Solberg World Rally Team – Ken Rees

Citroen Total World Rally Team and Citroen Junior Team – Sven Smets

BP Ford Abu Dhabi World Rally Team – Malcolm Wilson

Welcome to the end of day 'meet the driver' conference for team-managers.

Q: What an incredible day it has been for Sébastien Loeb, he's up to second position now. He started 1 minute 20 down from the lead, he's now adrift by just a handful of seconds – it's got to be one of his best days in rallying here in New Zealand.

SS: Yes I think it has been his best performance ever in New Zealand and I think it's been one of his best performance ever in his career. It was very to say what he was going to do – he was going flat-out from the very first metre. But he has done some incredible stage times this morning and this afternoon.

Q: Sébastien Ogier is obviously in the lead for the Citroen Juniors, but with the pace from what we've seen of Sébastien Loeb today – you would think there is no doubt Loeb is going to easily catch him tomorrow. Are there any team orders though that would stop him from fighting it out on the stages?

SS: No, I mean we've got to leave it the way it will go. Of course there is the fact Sébastien Ogier has never done the stages of tomorrow – where Sébastien Loeb has. Of course we would like if Sébastien Loeb wins, that Ogier stays in front of Jari-Matti – so he has to go fast. So for sure there is nothing with team orders.

Q: Malcolm, Sébastien has been the story of the day I think.

MW: It's not something I really want to talk about. In a sense I'm here to witness it as I think it is history has been made today. For Ford we're on the receiving end of an incredible performance by Sébastien. I've never in my entire career seen anything like it, so I'd have to really say a big compliment to him on his performance.

Q: Jari-Matti is in third position at the end of the day, he's kept plugging away all day; he started second on the road this morning – are you pleased with how he's performed today?

MW: He has done a great job all rally. He knows what he's got to do and he's put in a very strong performance as well. So we just hope he can keep pushing tomorrow on some difficult stages. I remember what happened to us, when we were in first and second position two years ago and it all went terribly wrong.

SS: I didn't want to mention it, that's why.

Q: Mikko Hirvonen seemed to have lost his sparkle here in New Zealand; we haven't seen the pace that we're used to seeing from him. Is there something wrong this weekend?

MW: No, I must admit it's very surprising. We thought this morning at least he'd be in a really strong road position to do a good job. But then he made a mistake on the third stage – quite a high speed one – it certainly knocked his confidence and it seems he hasn't been able to recover from that. But we'll just have to see, I haven't really spoken to him yet to see exactly how the rest of the day has gone. But I'm sure he'll still be pushing again tomorrow.

Q: Petter Solberg was first on the road this morning, sweeping it clear for all the other drivers. Tonight he is not on the podium – is there a bit of a regret in the position of electing to go first on the road or did you have no choice in the matter.

KR: We had no choice, Becs, as we said last night. We didn't take part in any tactics, we just drove hard and we knew if would slow down the others would too. So if you look at it, we've done 320 kilometres almost at the front of this field – today and yesterday. I'd say 80% of the event, at the moment we're fifth, but we are still challenging for the podium – we're only 20 seconds off. We know this event, there is 80 kilometres in the morning, we're fifth on the road, the

other boys have had the advantage – everybody in front of us has been either third, fourth, fifth or sixth on the road and been able to gain an advantage. Tomorrow it's us.

Q: A strong position tomorrow; maximum attack from Petter I'm assuming?

KR: When is he not at maximum attack? That's Petter – 110% and he's been doing it today. If you look on the long stage where we lost 43 to Sébastien, he was first on it. Every bed you watch – he's moving – you just can't find the line there. I'm not saying the others had the advantage but every car coming after has got some line to follow – something – we've got nothing. But not taking anything from the boys, they've done really well.

Present:

Sébastien Ogier
Sébastien Loeb
Jari-Matti Latvala

Welcome to the end of day 'meet the crews' conference with drivers

Q: You have the lead at the end of the day, 5.1 seconds over Sébastien Loeb – it's been a fabulous day out there today.

SO: It was quite perfect day for me – I pushed as fast as I can from the first stage until the end of the last super stage. But okay, for me I think it was difficult to be faster than that, but Seb was very, very fast today and now for tomorrow I will continue to push and the rally is never finished until the finish like.

Q: When we spoke to you last all three drivers at the press conference said you want to be watching Sébastien Loeb tomorrow – he's going to be coming up really fast. Did you imagine he'd be in second position at the end of today?

SO: As we say, you never know with Seb because he can make some incredible times. But we didn't expect he'd be fast like that. We knew that he was able to close on the lead but not like this.

Q: So you're going to continue to fight tomorrow. Obviously your first win is possible here and that would be special for you but again Sebastian's pace from today it's going to be difficult.

SO: It is going to be very, very difficult. It's already good for me to lead the rally at the end of day two. It's the first time for me so I'm already happy about my rally. But I really want to finish now, get to the end and if I get a podium it would be very best but I would try my best to try to win, but for sure another day tomorrow. I will scrub the road and the guys know very well the state of the roads – but I will do my best and we will see.

Q: Sébastien Loeb, what an incredible day you've had out there. It has to be the best day of your career surely?

SL: Maybe. An incredible day for sure. I was pushing on the limit from the first to the last of the day's stages and for once I was not first on the road and I was not cleaning and I had a good road position. So I try to do everything I can, I knew this road position would be a good advantage and I tried to take everything from this and finally it was even more than I expected. For sure I expected to come back in the fight but with Jari-Matti they were still going very fast. I was planning for the podium and now we are maybe in the position for the win – again, so that's very good news compared to yesterday lunchtime we were 1 minute 40 behind and now we are in the fight.

Q: Where there any dramas at all; you must have been taking a huge amount of risks to be setting those times, did you have any moments out there today?

SL: I had a few moments, but no dramas. I had enough dramas yesterday.

Q: Good stages tomorrow, but difficult. We remember what happened to Ford the last time on the final day, so nothing is finished yet.

SL: No, nothing is finished. Like Seb said, tomorrow will be a long day – a difficult day, tricky stages with anything could happen – so we will see. For me also, we will try to push, to try to win and we will see how we will go.

Q: Second on the road for you today, how much of a disadvantage do you think that put you at being second on the road. It seemed to be pretty tough being first on the road.

J-ML: Being second car on the road compared to Friday being fourth, it was quite a difference. It was difficult in the morning and I didn't find the best rhythm and basically I felt I was losing too much time in the stages. But I drive the car as quick as I can, but okay I did little mistakes of course and I was pushing a bit too hard in some places, but generally speaking I tried to go as quick as I can on that position.

Q: 33 seconds adrift of the lead now, 27 adrift of Sébastien Loeb, what is the approach of you tomorrow now, is it to just hold third position or are you going to try push these guys?

J-ML: If you look at today's stage times, which Sébastien Loeb and Ogier did today, especially in the afternoon – I had no chance. So okay I will have a better position tomorrow – but they are quite far away and it's not easy to catch. But I just want to concentrate to work on the third place and see if we are getting closer to these guys I will try some pressure. But the main concern for me now is to keep on that third position.